

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 00639 131334Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-14
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 SOE-02 DODE-00
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, UK, TECA
SUBJECT: MORE ON BRITISH REACTOR CHOICE

REF: (A) 77 LONDON 20692; (B) 77 LONDON 19430

1. INTENSE DISCUSSION CONTINUES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON THE CHOICE OF BRITAIN'S NEXT NUCLEAR REACTOR ORDER (REFTELS). RECENT DAYS HAVE SEEN AN OFFER BY ROLLS ROYCE TO BUILD U.S.-DESIGNED PRESSURIZED WATER REACTORS (PWR) UNDER LICENSE; THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE PREVIOUS OFFER BY KRAFTWERK UNION (SIEMENS). HOWEVER, A FRONT PAGE "FINANCIAL TIMES" ARTICLE BY ROY HODSEN TODAY SUGGESTS THAT ENERGY SECRETARY BENN WILL SOON SEEK CABINET APPROVAL OF TWO BRITISH-DESIGNED ADVANCED GAS-COOLED REACTORS (AGR).

2. THE ARTICLE STATES BENN MAY OUTFLANK PWR SUPPORTERS BY ASKING THE CABINET TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY STUDIES FOR THE PWR SO A THIRD NUCLEAR POWER STATION ORDER, NOT PLACED BEFORE 1982, COULD BE DECIDED ON THE RELATIVE MERITS OF THE TWO REACTOR TYPES. IT SUGGESTS THAT THIS OPTION WOULD ASSIST ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY (AEA) PROPONENTS OF A COMMERCIAL-SCALE PROTOTYPE FAST-BREEDER REACTOR, WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE SUFFER

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PAGE 02 LONDON 00639 131334Z

"IF(THE AEA) DIVIDED ITS ATTENTIONS BETWEEN BOTH THE AGR AND THE PWR."

3. THIS LATTER ASPECT MAY BE OVERBLOWN, AS THE BULK OF THE PRELIMINARY SAFETY AND DEVELOPMENT WORK ON A PWR WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY THE CEBG, DRAWING UPON THE AEA ONLY PERIODICALLY FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

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